

The Cement Garden – Father

His looks

He has got a pipe in his mouth. (10)

His character

Father is “a **frail, irascible, obsessive** man with yellowish hands and face.” (9)

He **doesn't speak much**; he always just “nodded” and “without a word he returned indoors”. (10)

He knows “how to use his pipe against [mother]” (11)

Father is very **headstrong** and **stubborn**; during his disagreement with mother he says “‘out of the question’ sending the bags back and that was the end of it.” (11)

In Jack's opinion he looks “**self-important** and foolish”. (11)

“Father was a **semi-invalid** he would have to compete with Tom for Mother's attention.” (13)

There are “a few running jokes in the family, initiated and maintained by [...] father” (15) against the other family members but no jokes against he himself. After Julie and Jack's joke against him he sulks. (16)

He is extremely **fussy** and **pedantic**: “Where butter strayed over the edge of his bread he folded it back with a quick sliding movement of his knife” (16).

“Noise, chaos, children milling around without purpose, irritated him profoundly. There was never a birthday party during which he did not lose his temper with someone.” (35)

Father's temper and state of health

Father has suffered from a heart attack. (13)

He suffers from constipation. (15)

He is quickly displeased and annoyed. (14)

“He was convinced of the sanity of his ideas.” (17)

His garden

“He had constructed rather than cultivated his garden.” (14)

“[Father] chose flowers for their neatness and symmetry. He liked tulips best of all and planted them well apart. He did not like bushes or ivy or roses. He would have **nothing that tangled**.” (15)

“Before his first heart attack he had intended to build a high wall round his special world.” (15)

Father – Tom

“Tom was scared of his father [...].” (13)

Father was “strict with [Tom], always going on at him in a needling sort of way. He used Mother against Tom much as he used his pipe against her” (13).

Father – Jack

While mixing the cement and working in the garden Jack “for once [...] felt at ease with him.” (17)

As if erasing his memory of his father, Jack “picked up the plank and carefully smoothed away [Father’s] impression in the soft, fresh concrete.” (19)

Father – Julie

“Father had never taken her seriously, he said it was daft in a girl, running fast, and not long before he died he refused to come to a sports meeting with us.” (20)

Father dies in the early summer of Jack’s fourteenth year (9) while Jack is masturbating upstairs instead of helping him mixing the cement (18). “My father was lying face down on the ground, his head resting on the newly spread concrete.” (18)